

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method, comprising:
 - coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
 - coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
 - coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
 - radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member.
2. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
 - coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
 - coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
 - coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
 - radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;

The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve comprises an internal flange.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:
 - inserting the end of the first tubular member into the end of the tubular sleeve into abutment with the internal flange.
4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:
 - inserting the end of the second tubular member into said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve into abutment with the internal flange.
5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:
 - inserting the end of the second tubular member into said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve into abutment with the internal flange.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve comprises an external flange.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting the end of the tubular sleeve into the end of the first tubular member until the end of the first tubular member abuts the external flange.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve into the end of the second tubular member until the end of the second tubular member abuts the external flange.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve into the end of the second tubular member until the end of the second tubular member abuts the external flange.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting a retaining ring between the end of the first tubular member and the end of the tubular sleeve.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting another retaining ring between the end of the second tubular member and said another~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting a retaining ring between the end of the first tubular member and said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the retaining ring is resilient.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the retaining ring and the other retaining ring are resilient.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the retaining ring is resilient.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

deforming the end of the tubular sleeve.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

deforming said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

deforming said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

coupling a retaining ring to the end of the first tubular member.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 19, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

coupling another retaining ring to the end of the second tubular member.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

coupling a retaining ring to the end of the second tubular member.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the retaining ring is resilient.

23. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the retaining ring and the other retaining ring are resilient.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the retaining ring is resilient.

25. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;

coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;

coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and

radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;

~~The method of claim 1,~~ wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

heating the end of the tubular sleeve; and

inserting the end of the first tubular member into the end of the tubular sleeve.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

heating said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve; and

inserting the end of the second tubular member into said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

27. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;

coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;

coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and

radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;

~~The method of claim 1,~~ wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

heating said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve; and

inserting the end of the second tubular member into said another ~~the other~~ end of the tubular sleeve.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting the end of the first tubular member into the end of the tubular sleeve;

and

latching the end of the first tubular member to the end of the tubular sleeve.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to the other end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting the end of the second tubular member into the end of the tubular sleeve;

and

latching the end of the second tubular member to the other end of the tubular sleeve.

30. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein coupling the end of the second tubular member to the other end of the tubular sleeve comprises:

inserting the end of the second tubular member into the end of the tubular sleeve;
and
latching the end of the second tubular member to the other end of the tubular sleeve.

31. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve further comprises one or more sealing members for sealing the interface between the tubular sleeve and at least one of the tubular members.

32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

placing the tubular members and the tubular sleeve in another structure; and
then radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member.

33. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
placing the tubular members in another structure;
then radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member; and

~~The method of claim 32, further comprising:~~

radially expanding the tubular sleeve into engagement with the structure.

34. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;

placing the tubular members in another structure;
then radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and
the second tubular member; and
~~The method of claim 32, further comprising:~~
sealing an annulus between the tubular sleeve and the other structure.

35. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein the other structure comprises a wellbore.

36. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein the other structure comprises a wellbore casing.

37. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the
second tubular member;
~~The method of claim 1,~~ wherein the tubular sleeve further comprises a sealing element coupled to the exterior of the tubular sleeve.

38. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve is metallic.

39. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve is non-metallic.

40. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve is plastic.

41. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the tubular sleeve is ceramic.

42. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the
second tubular member; and~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~
breaking the tubular sleeve.
43. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the
second tubular member;
~~The method of claim 1,~~ wherein the tubular sleeve includes one or more longitudinal slots.
44. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the
second tubular member;
~~The method of claim 1,~~
wherein the tubular sleeve includes one or more radial passages.

45. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and; the second tubular member, ~~and the tubular sleeve~~ comprises:

displacing an expansion cone within and relative to the first and second tubular members.

46. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and; the second tubular member, ~~and the tubular sleeve~~ comprises:

applying radial pressure to the interior surfaces of the first and second tubular member using a rotating member.

47. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

amorphously bonding the first and second tubular members during the radial expansion and plastic deformation of the first and second tubular members.

48. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;

coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;

coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;

radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member; and

~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~

welding the first and second tubular members during the radial expansion and plastic deformation of the first and second tubular members.

49. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing a fluid tight seal within the ~~threaded~~-coupling between the first and second tubular members during the radial expansion and plastic deformation of the first and second tubular members.

50. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential tension;
 placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential compression; and
 placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential compression.
51. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential compression;
 placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential tension; and
 placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential tension.
52. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member comprises:
 radially expanding and plastically deforming only the portions of the first and second members proximate the tubular sleeve.
53. (Original) The method of claim 52, further comprising:
 providing a fluid tight seal between the tubular sleeve and at least one of the first and second tubular members.
54. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
 coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
 coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
 coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
 radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;
 ~~The method of claim 1,~~
 wherein the first tubular member comprises internal threads; and
 wherein the second tubular member comprises external threads that engage the internal threads of the first tubular member.

55. (Original) The method of claim 54, wherein radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member comprises:

radially expanding and plastically deforming only the portions of the first and second members proximate the threads of the first and second tubular members.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:

providing a fluid tight seal between the threads of the first and second tubular members.

57. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:

providing a fluid tight seal between the tubular sleeve and at least one of the first and second tubular members.

58. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;

coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;

coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and

radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;

~~The method of claim 1,~~ wherein the first and second tubular members comprise wellbore casings.

59. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first and second tubular members comprise pipes.

60. (Original) A method, comprising:

providing a tubular sleeve comprising an internal flange positioned between the ends of the tubular sleeve;

inserting an end of a first tubular member into an end of the tubular sleeve into abutment with the internal flange;

inserting an end of a second tubular member into another end of the tubular sleeve into abutment the internal flange;
threadably coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;
placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential tension;
placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential compression; and
placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential compression.

61. (Original) A method, comprising:

providing a tubular sleeve comprising an external flange positioned between the ends of the tubular sleeve;
inserting an end of the tubular sleeve into an end of a first tubular member until the end of the first tubular member abuts with the external flange;
inserting another end of the tubular sleeve into an end of the second tubular member until the end of the second tubular member abuts the external flange;
threadably coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
radially expanding and plastically deforming the first tubular member and the second tubular member;
placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential compression;
placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential tension; and
placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential tension.

62. (Original) A method, comprising:

providing a tubular sleeve comprising an internal flange positioned between the ends of the tubular sleeve;
inserting an end of a first tubular member into an end of the tubular sleeve into abutment with the internal flange;
inserting an end of a second tubular member into another end of the tubular sleeve into abutment the internal flange;

threadably coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
radially expanding and plastically deforming only the portions of the first tubular member and the second tubular member proximate the threads of the first and second tubular members;
placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential tension;
placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential compression; and
placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential compression.

63. (Original) A method, comprising:

providing a tubular sleeve comprising an external flange positioned between the ends of the tubular sleeve;
inserting an end of the tubular sleeve into an end of a first tubular member until the end of the first tubular member abuts with the external flange;
inserting another end of the tubular sleeve into an end of the second tubular member until the end of the second tubular member abuts the external flange;
threadably coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members;
radially expanding and plastically deforming only the portions of the first tubular member and the second tubular member proximate the threads of the first and second tubular members;
placing the tubular sleeve in circumferential compression;
placing the end of the first tubular member in circumferential tension; and
placing the end of the second tubular member in circumferential tension.

64. - 144. (Cancelled)

145. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising radially expanding and plastically deforming the tubular sleeve.

146. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising displacing an expansion device within and relative to the first tubular member, the second tubular member and the tubular sleeve.

147. (New) A method, comprising:

- coupling an end of a first tubular member to an end of a tubular sleeve;
- coupling an end of a second tubular member to another end of the tubular sleeve;
- coupling the ends of the first and second tubular members; and
- moving an expansion device through the tubular members and the tubular sleeve to radially expand and plastically deform the tubular members and the tubular sleeve.